

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 1383

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, VM, TH
SUBJECT: THAI-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS

SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER UPPADIT PACHARIYANKUN BELIEVES
THAT THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT IS SINCERE IN ITS DESIRE
TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF ASEAN AND
THAT FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARDS NORMALIZATION, INCLUDING
OPENING OF THE AMBER ONE AIR ROUTE BETWEEN BANGKOK AND
HONG KONG, WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. END
SUMMARY:

1. I MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER UPPADIT ON JANUARY 13
IN ORDER TO DISCUSS WITH HIM SOME OF THE CONCLUSIONS
REACHED AT THE RECENT CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE IN
HONG KONG, AS WELL AS TO GET HIS PERSONAL IMPRESSION
OF THIS WEEK'S CONVERSATIONS WITH VIETNAMESE FOREIGN
MINISTER NGUYEN DUH TRINH. IN MY REVIEW OF THE HONG
KONG MEETING, I STRESSED THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING THE
WIDESPREAD PERCEPTION OF AMERICAN LOSS OF INTEREST
IN ASIA, THE CONSENSUS OF THE MEETING HAD BEEN THAT
TIES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ASIA REMAINED
CLOSE AND ECONOMICALLY SIGNIFICANT. I NOTED THAT
OUR ECONOMIC LINKS OBVIOUSLY WERE VERY MUCH CONDITIONED BY
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THE SCOPE OF JAPANESE-AMERICAN TRADE BUT EMPHASIZED
THAT OUR COMMERCIAL AND INVESTMENT ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT
ASIA WAS AT AN EVER INCREASING LEVEL. FOREIGN MINISTER
UPPADIT LISTENED ATTENTIVELY TO MY PRESENTATION
AND APPEARED MOST INTERESTED IN MY EXPLANATION OF
THE HUMAN RIGHTS DISCUSSIONS WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE
IN HONG KONG. I BELIEVE HE UNDERSTANDS BETTER

THAT HE DID BEFORE THE DEGREE TO WHICH AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS POSITIONS ARE THE RESULT OF LEGISLATIVE STRICTURES AS WELL AS OF HISTORIC AMERICAN BELIEFS.

2. TURNING TO THE MEETINGS THIS WEEK WITH SRV FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN DUY TRINH, UPPADIT REVIEWED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THAI-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS COMMENCING WITH HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH TRINH AT THE UNITED NATIONS IN SEPTEMBER 1977. UPPADIT SAID THAT THE TALKS HAD BEEN CARRIED ON IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF FRIENDSHIP AND SHARED DESIRE FOR PEACE IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. BOTH SIDES HAD AGREED TO THE EARLY EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS, AND TWO AGREEMENTS, ONE ON AIR TRANSPORTATION AND ONE ON ECONOMIC TECHNICAL COOPERATION, HAD BEEN SIGNED. BOTH SIDES HAD AGREED TO ADHERE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE, AND UPPADIT CHARACTERIZED THE OPENING OF EMBASSIES AS A "GOOD OMEN."

3. ACCORDING TO UPPADIT, THE VIETNAMESE WERE PLIANT AND RESTRAINED. THEY DID NOT USE REVOLUTIONARY JARGON AND, IN HIS VIEW, THE ATTITUDE OF THE VIETNAMESE HAD CHANGED COMPLETELY. HE SAID THAT HE BELIEVED IN THE SINCERITY OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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VIETNAMESE DESIRE FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE ASEAN COUNTRIES. IN HIS VIEW, THE VIETNAMESE NEED A PERIOD OF PEACE DURING WHICH THEY CAN CONCENTRATE ON THEIR ECONOMIC WOES.

4. IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS, UPPADIT STATED THAT HE IS VERY HOPEFUL THAT REOPENING ROUTE AMBER ONE ACROSS LAOS AND VIETNAM TO HONG KONG WILL BE APPROVED AT NEXT MONTH'S THAI-VIETNAMESE TALKS IN VIENTIANE. HE ALSO INFORMED ME THAT THE QUESTION OF US AIRCRAFT AND HELICOPTERS BROUGHT TO THAILAND BY ESCAPING REFUGEES IN 1975 WAS NEVER RAISED BY THE VIETNAMESE AND ONLY EMERGED DURING THE VIETNAMESE PRESS CONFERENCE.

5. DURING AN EARLIER MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, I WAS INFORMED THAT THE VIETNAMESE HAD EXPRESSED A KEEN DESIRE FOR BILATERAL TRADE WITH THAILAND AND EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO PURCHASE RICE HERE. THE MINISTER NOTED CHEERFULLY THAT THE VIETNAMESE HAD NO FUNDS FOR SUCH PURCHASES BUT THAT A BARTER DEAL OF THAI RICE FOR VIETNAMESE LUMBER

WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT SOME FUTURE DATE.
WHITEHOUSE

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